

## Message Text

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21

ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-16 EA-11 EUR-25 NEA-14 RSC-01 IO-14

ISO-00 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 OMB-01

MMS-04 SAB-01 SAM-01 AID-20 EB-11 DRC-01 /223 W

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R 031622Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1781

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 08336

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MARR, PFOR, UK, IN, XO, MV

SUBJECT: IOPZ, DIEGO GARCIA, AND THE MALDIVES: BRITISH  
VIEW OF INDIAN POLICY

REF: LONDON 7591 (NOTAL); STATE 140892 (NOTAL); PARIS  
16077 (NOTAL); USUN 2217 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: BRITISH DOUBT INDIANS ARE PUSHING IOPZ PROPOSAL  
AT PRESENT, BUT THINK INDIANS CAPABLE OF HOPPING ABOARD  
SUCH A BANDWAGON IF AUSTRALIANS TAKE THE LEAD. BRITISH  
DISCOUNT FEARS EXPRESSED BY INDIANS TO FRENCH ABOUT POS-  
SIBLE SOVIET BASE IN THE MALDIVES. RATHER, BRITISH THINK  
INDIANS HARBOR AMBITIONS TO IMPROVE THEIR INFLUENCE IN  
MALDIVE ISLANDS, AND PERHAPS REPLACE BRITISH AT GAN AIR  
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BASE, IF BRITISH DECIDE TO RELINQUISH IT (COMMENT: AD-

MITTEDLY A LONG SHOT). MALDIVES' PM WILL VISIT UK IN SEPTEMBER, AND BRITISH WILL HELP HIS PEOPLE PREPARE THEIR SUBMISSION FOR IDA LOAN TO BUILD CIVILIAN AIRPORT. END SUMMARY.

1. GRATEFUL FOR DEPARTMENT'S REPLY (STATE REFTEL) WHICH WE PASSED ON JULY 2 TO FCO DEPARTMENT HEAD CHALMERS, WHO WILL RELAY IT TO ENNALS. ANSWERING ANOTHER QUERY FROM US, CHALMERS EXPRESSED DOUBT THAT INDIANS HAVE COME AROUND TO PUSHING IOPZ PROPOSAL. HE NOTED SUBJECT WAS NEVER RAISED WITH HIM BY ANY INDIAN OFFICIAL (INCLUDING TREVADI) OR JOURNALIST HE MET DURING EXTENSIVE RECENT VISIT TO INDIA. ON OTHER HAND, IF AUSTRALIANS MAKE A BIG THING OF DIEGO GARCIA EXTENSION, AS THEY MIGHT, INDIANS COULD HOP ABOARD ON ASSUMPTION THIS WOULD BE OPPORTUNITY THEY COULD NOT AFFORD TO MISS.

2. IN THIS CONNECTION, CHALMERS DEPRECATED INDIAN FEAR THAT DIEGO GARCIA EXTENSION MIGHT SERVE AS PRETEXT FOR SOVIET BASE IN MALDIVES, AS EXPRESSED BY INDIANS TO FRENCH (PARIS REFTEL). WHILE SUCH FEAR MAY EXIST AMONG A FEW INDIANS, CHALMERS THOUGHT MAIN REASON INDIANS USE ARGUMENT IS TO VINDICATE THEIR OWN AMBITIONS IN THE MALDIVES.

3. INDIANS ARE GENERALLY INTERESTED IN IMPROVING THEIR INFLUENCE IN MALDIVES, CHALMERS CONTINUED, PARTLY AS A BRIDGE TO BETTER RELATIONSHIP WITH SINGAPORE, WITH WHICH MALDIVES ARE IN CLOSER CONTACT DUE TO THEIR FISHING FLEET. INDIANS HAVE EXPRESSED SUCH LINE OF THOUGHT TO BRITISH, CHALMERS SAID, IN CASE HMG REVIEW OF DEFENSE COMMITMENTS NOW UNDERWAY SHOULD RESULT IN DECISION TO RELINQUISH GAN ISLAND BASE. SOME INDIANS ARE TOYING WITH IDEA THAT INDIA SHOULD THEN PERHAPS TAKE OVER GAN AIR BASE TO PREEMPT SOVIETS. MALDIVIANS FOR THEIR PART, CHALMERS SAID, HAVE DECIDED BRITISH WILL NOT RELINQUISH GAN AND ARE NOT CONCERNED. THOUGH THERE ARE RUMORS OF DISSIDENCE IN MALDIVES, AND SUSPICION EXPRESSED THAT INDIANS ARE BEHIND IT, CHALMERS SUGGESTED MORE LIKELY EXPLANATION, AT THIS STAGE AT LEAST, IS THAT SOME ISLANDERS

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FEEL THEY ARE NOT SHARING SUFFICIENTLY IN PROFITS OF NEW TOURIST INDUSTRY.

4. MALDIVES' PM ZAKI HAS ACCEPTED INVITATION TO VISIT UK IN SEPTEMBER FOR A WEEK. BRITISH EXPECT TO ASSIST MALDIVIANS IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT OF MODESTLY EXPANDED TOURIST FACILITIES. IN PARTICULAR, BRITISH WILL HELP PREPARE MALDIVIAN PRESENTATION TO IDA FOR LOAN TO BUILD

AIRPORT. MEANWHILE BRITISH WILL AGAIN ACCEDE TO MAL-  
DIVIAN REQUEST FOR USE OF GAN AIRFIELD TO BRING IN TOUR-  
IST PLANES THIS YEAR.

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## Message Attributes

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